

Pep Talk

The holiday season is festive and fun – and hectic. Extra demands of the day can leave you weary, worn out and yearning for a nap. Here are 5 energy boosters to the rescue:

- 1. Don't cheat on sleep.** If you routinely deprive yourself of sleep, you'll pay for it with fatigue. Adults need 7 to 9 hours a day; even an extra hour of sleep can dramatically improve energy. Tip: The best way to improve sleep is to maintain a firm time for going to bed and awakening.
- 2. Get physical.** Research indicates exercise is one of the best ways to increase energy. Avoid strenuous workouts that might overly tire you. Moderate activities such as a daily walk or swim are ideal.
- 3. Fuel up.** Several servings of fruits and vegetables a day should provide a noticeable increase in energy. Plus these foods have far fewer calories than heavy, high-calorie snacks and most fast food.
- 4. Drink to your health.** Dehydration is another energy thief – it reduces blood flow to your organs, including your brain. Don't wait until you're thirsty. When you exercise or perspire heavily, drink plenty of water. *Tip:* Alcohol also contributes to dehydration and reduces your mental and physical response.
- 5. Reduce stress.** Rushing to cross everything off your list can be exhausting. Slow down and set priorities so you only do essential things. Set aside time each day to relax. On-the-go techniques such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation can revive you. *Tip:* Remember to have fun rather than waste energy trying to make everything perfect.

Seek medical care for fatigue if it becomes severe, persists beyond 2 weeks, or is accompanied by fever, weight loss, other signs of illness, or unexplained muscle weakness.

Sources:

"Fatigue." Medline Plus, 7/17/07. Accessed 7/7/09 at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003088.htm>.

"Fight Fatigue with Your Fork." Psychology Today, 8/18/05. Accessed 7/7/09 at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200307/fight-fatigue-your-fork>.

BEST BITS

New warning on pediatric cold medicines: Don't give to children

under 4. Studies indicate they are ineffective for young children while they pose risks for dosing errors and accidental ingestion. Evidence suggests older children might not benefit from these drugs, either. When youngsters get the sniffles, give them plenty of rest and fluids. Get their pediatrician's okay before using medication.

Sources:
(TH 10.09)

Non-Prescription Cough and Cold Medicine Use in Children. FDA, 10/10/08. Accessed on 4/20/09 at <http://www.fda.gov>.

Cold and Cough Medicines: Information for Parents. CDC, 1/14/09. Accessed 2/20/09 at <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/PediatricColdMeds/>.

- **Third-hand smoke is the invisible tobacco residue that lingers** on fabrics, carpets or hair long after the smoke clears. It's a toxic brew of heavy metals, carcinogens and even radioactive materials, and may cling to surfaces for years. Third-hand smoke isn't good for anybody, but is thought to be particularly harmful to children and pets. Breathe easy: Ban smoking in your house or car. Open windows and fans aren't enough to remove the risks from third-hand smoke.

Source:
(TH 8.09)
"Third-hand Smoke: Another Reason To Quit Smoking." MGHfC, 12/31/08. Accessed 7/8/09 at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/12/081229105037.htm>.

- **"Produce" better health:** A Harvard University study has found that you can reduce your risk of heart disease by 4% with every additional serving of fruits or vegetables in your daily diet. Produce is filled with heart-friendly nutrients such as potassium, folate, fiber and antioxidants. So add fruit to your breakfast, lunch on vegetable soup or include a salad every night with dinner.

Source:
"Vegetables and Fruits: Get Plenty Every Day." Harvard School of Public Health. Accessed 6/13/09 at <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-full-story/index.html>.

TH

Better Blood Pressure

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Is your blood pressure staying too high? In addition to prescribed medications, lifestyle changes can help bring it down to a healthier level, according to the American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). To learn more about lowering blood pressure with lifestyle, take the quiz.

1. Long-term effects of untreated high blood pressure (HBP) include:
 - a. Heart disease
 - b. Stroke
 - c. Kidney failure
 - d. All of the above
2. The best physical activity for lowering blood pressure is aerobic exercise.
True False
3. The risk factor with serious impact on blood pressure is:
 - a. High-protein diet
 - b. Alcohol abstinence
 - c. Tobacco use
 - d. None of the above
4. The recommended sodium limit for people with HBP is 2,300 mg daily.
True False
5. The DASH diet for lowering blood pressure does not include:
 - a. Fruits and vegetables
 - b. Full-fat dairy products
 - c. Lean meat, poultry and fish
 - d. Cereals and grains
6. Nearly 25% of adult Americans have hypertension.
True False

ANSWERS

-
1. *d.* High blood pressure, or hypertension, usually starts slowly and silently – without symptoms. Serious effects such as heart disease, stroke or kidney failure usually develop much later.
 2. *True.* Any activity that involves moderate aerobic exercise performed at least 5 days a week can significantly lower blood pressure. Aerobic refers to activity you can perform nonstop for several minutes at a slightly

elevated heart rate; progress gradually to 30 to 60 minutes per day – with your provider’s approval. *Tip:* Even 10 minutes of exercise 3 times a day can help lower blood pressure.

3. *c.* People with hypertension who smoke or chew tobacco experience significantly higher rates of cardiovascular disease – a good reason to quit. Smoking causes blood vessels to narrow, forcing the heart to beat faster and work harder. *Tip:* Though moderate alcohol intake may aid heart health, there is a direct connection between HBP and excess alcohol consumption; the recommended limit is 2 drinks a day for men and 1 for women.

4. *False.* To help control HBP the American Heart Association recommends a daily limit of 1,500 mg of sodium for people with HBP and those at high risk for developing it, including African Americans and middle-aged and older adults. The limit for healthy people at lower risk for HBP is 2,300 mg (1 teaspoon of salt) a day.

5. *b.* The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet includes low-fat or non-fat dairy foods, and at least 8 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Substituting whole grains for refined grains plays a role as well. NHLBI research shows this diet works as effectively as some blood pressure medications in some people.

6. *False.* Nearly a third of adults have HBP while more than half of those age 60+ have it.

MORE INFO:

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>

Sources:

Randy Wexler, MD, et al. “Nonpharmacologic strategies for managing hypertension.” American Family Physician 73 (2006): 1953-1956.

Jennifer Lochner, MD, et al. “How effective are lifestyle changes for controlling hypertension?” The Journal of Family Practice 55 (2006): 73-74.

What the Numbers Mean

The first (higher) number represents the *systolic* pressure exerted as your heart is pumping blood. The second (lower) number represents the *diastolic* pressure exerted by the heart at rest, between beats. Blood pressure is measured in *millimeters of mercury* (mm Hg).

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

Category	Systolic	Diastolic
High Blood Pressure	140 or higher	and 90 or higher
High Normal	130-139	and 85-89
Normal	120-129	and 80-84

A level *below* 120/80 (“120 over 80”) is considered ideal. **Note:** If you have diabetes or kidney disease, your provider will diagnose high blood pressure in 2 visits if your reading each time is 130/80 or higher.

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FITNESS GUIDELINES

Calorie Cutting – 13 Easy Ways

Believe it or not, you can drop pounds and still enjoy eating. Instead of cutting out food, cut portion sizes, and choose lighter alternatives. For example:

1. Replace a 2-ounce bag of potato chips with 1 cup of plain popcorn to save 141 calories.
2. Cut 125 to 150 calories by sipping mineral water with a lime twist instead of wine or beer.
3. Cut 30 to 60 calories per tablespoon by using reduced-fat mayonnaise instead of regular.
4. Reduce the size of your meat portions from 6 ounces to 3, about the size of a deck of cards.
5. Replace your doughnut or cinnamon bun with a whole-grain English muffin.
6. Dining out: Choose baked, broiled or grilled chicken or fish rather than red meat or deep-fried foods. Try vegetarian pizza with less cheese and no fatty meats.

7. Replace a candy bar with a banana for more nutrition and about 100 fewer calories.
 8. Choose canned fruit packed in natural juice rather than syrup.
 9. Limit peanut butter to 1 tablespoon per sandwich.
 10. Split dessert with a friend.
 11. Replace a can of regular cola with a tall glass of water.
 12. Steam your vegetables rather than sauté them in oil or butter.
 13. Have a low-calorie day to save up for a treat – dessert, dinner out or a special occasion.
- More Tips: You can include 100 to 200 calories' worth of treats every day, depending on your nutritional needs. And try a new cookbook that emphasizes flavor instead of fat for fewer calories. Remember, eating is about health and pleasure.

[cutline]

Need to lose but love to eat? *Get moving.* Burning an extra 150 calories each day in planned exercise can help you drop $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ pound a week. Any activity helps. The key is frequency.

[no source]

At Home with Exercise

Let's face it – gyms and group exercise aren't for everyone. If you're the type who'd rather work up a sweat in the comfort of your home, here's how to make the most of your personal gym:

- **Create a dedicated space.** Post a “workout zone” sign, or cover the area with a rubber mat. Stake your territory and you are more likely to use it.
- **Gear up.** Choose shoes and clothing appropriate for your needs.
- **Make exercise a pleasure.** Yes, you can. Get moving to your favorite show or to music (but not too loud – protect your hearing).
- **Exercise to TV, video or Internet fitness programs.** You can research DVD reviews on the Web to find ones best suited for you.

- **No room for equipment?** How about pushups, crunches, jogging in place, or dancing? Invest in portable, inexpensive exercise bands, hand weights, a step bench or yoga mat.

Note: Gradually progress to 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Get your provider's advice first if you have a medical condition or are new to exercise.

Home exercise can be as effective as a gym workout with the added benefits of privacy and saving money and commute time. Running out of excuses?

Source:

"The Right Exercise Program For You Starts here." *Fit Facts*, ACE Fitness. Accessed on 7/2/09 at http://www.acefitness.org/FITFACTS/pdfs/fitfacts/itemid_2626.pdf.

GOAL LINE: November 19 is the Great American Smokeout. If you smoke, join millions of Americans who choose this day to quit tobacco.

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BALANCE WORK & FAMILY

Family Fun Away from TV

Many families spend hours in front of a glowing screen and miss time interacting with each other. It's easy to find things to do as a family besides watching TV.

Get everyone moving. Go swimming at a community pool, take a family walk, or play catch – find activities to suit each skill level.

Go on an adventure. Visit the zoo or aquarium, a children's museum or science center.

Create together. Paint, color, or make a birdhouse.

Turn chores into games. For example, weeding or raking leaves can become a competition.

Have a game night complete with prizes and refreshments. Board games aren't as popular as they used to be – but your kids can enjoy them as much as you did.

If screen time is a must, limit viewing and video gaming to a total of 2 hours a day. Keep TVs and computers out of children's

bedrooms and turn the TV off during dinner.

It might be hard to push the “off” button at first, but once you get started, you’ll be turned on to the pleasure of family life for good.

Sources:

"Fun Ways to Enjoy TV-Free Family Time." Washington State University Extension, 6/15/09. Accessed on 6/25/09 at http://www.extension.org/pages/Fun_Ways_to_Enjoy_TV-Free_Family_Time.

“Turn Off the TV!” Disney Family.com. Accessed on 6/25/09 at <http://family.go.com/entertainment/pkg-tv-turnoff/>.

“Helpful Ways to Reduce Screen Time.” National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. Accessed on 7/2/09 at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/live-it/screen-time.htm>.

MIND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Job Performance *and* Self-Esteem

What sets top performers apart? They think “yes” regardless of circumstances. These winners find ways to get things done, whether it’s tackling a difficult project at work or resolving a troubling issue at home.

That’s not to say take-charge types never get discouraged – they do. The difference? They’re confident things will work out.

Do you have confidence to succeed? Check the boxes that describe you:

- ☐ **I give myself credit.** I think of positive events in my life as a direct result of my talents.
- ☐ **I put setbacks in perspective.** When I have a bad day, I put it behind me and move on.
- ☐ **I focus on my strengths.** I know it’s important to own up to my mistakes. But I also celebrate my successes and feel good about them.
- ☐ **I take one step at a time.** If the big picture overwhelms and worries me, I focus on the next task, conversation, project or event.
- ☐ **I view failures as opportunities.** I learn and improve from mistakes.
- ☐ **I trust my instincts.** I avoid second-guessing my decisions.

- ☐ **I am confident.** I smile, hold my head up, and look people in the eye.
- ☐ **I surround myself with upbeat people.** A winning attitude is infectious.

If you checked all 8, good for you! If you left some of the boxes blank, look at how you approach problems and life in general. Roadblocks to success, such as fear, doubt and low self-esteem, can keep you from reaching your full potential.

Life is full of hurdles – but we can jump them by changing our attitude. Start each day with a big vote of confidence for you. Keep your inner chatter positive by saying to yourself: 1) *Today is a great day in my life.* 2) *I am strong, capable and ready to win.* 3) *I can handle anything.* 4) *Nothing can get me down.* 5) *I'm proud of my success.*

Final thought: Even if you don't always feel your best, getting to "great" is achievable. Don't be afraid to think big!

Sources:

"Learned Optimism: The Key to a Happier Life." UCSD online, 2005. Accessed 7/8/09 at <http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu>.

"Resilience: Build Skills to Endure Hardship." Mayo Clinic, 2008. Accessed 7/8/09 at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/resilience/MH00078>.

"Stress Management." NLM, 2/6/08. Accessed 7/8/09 at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001942.htm>.

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SELF CARE

Surprising Ways to Prevent Diabetes

Keeping your blood sugar at healthy levels isn't just a matter of genetics or avoiding sweets. Scientists are closing in on key lifestyle factors that appear to increase risk for developing type 2 diabetes, a potentially disabling and fatal disease. But diabetes is often preventable. Consider these recent developments in diabetes research:

You may have heard that a healthy weight lowers your

chances of developing type 2 diabetes. What you may not know is that dropping just 5-10% of your weight may prevent diabetes (10% of 180 pounds is 18 pounds).

To reach and maintain a healthy weight, watch what you eat and get regular exercise.

Puffing on cigarettes may not be the first habit that comes to mind in connection with preventing diabetes. However, smoking raises blood sugar levels – a warning sign for diabetes. Scientists believe smoking may cause insulin resistance (the body's inability to use insulin properly) by affecting the pancreas, which makes insulin.

If you smoke, it's worth your health to quit. You not only reduce your type 2 risk, but lower your chances of developing heart disease, cancer and other conditions.

Another factor scientists are focusing on is shuteye. Data from a federal health and nutrition survey of nearly 9,000 people suggests getting an average of 5 hours or less of sleep daily raises diabetes risk. One theory: Too little sleep may increase insulin resistance and lower glucose tolerance, setting the stage for unhealthy blood sugar levels.

If you have trouble getting enough sleep, talk to your provider. Regular exercise, a regular bedtime and cutting back on caffeine may help.

And then there's the question of carbohydrates – those with a low-glycemic load, such as fiber-rich whole grains, may help control blood sugar levels. They produce a slower rise in blood sugar than their high-glycemic cousins – simple, refined carbs such as white bread and white rice.

Another diabetes fighter, magnesium, found in nuts, whole grains, leafy greens and beans, may reduce the body's ability to resist insulin.

The factors listed above are all controllable. And it's never too late to quit smoking, get more sleep, eat better or shed pounds. Change is often difficult, but your health is worth it.

Sources:

"Research Reveals New Ways to Fight Diabetes." Tufts Health & Nutrition Newsletter, 2/08. Accessed 6/30/09 at <http://www.tuftshealthletter.com/ShowArticle.aspx?rowId=11>.

"Smoking." ADA, 2009. Accessed 7/8/09 at <http://www.diabetes.org/type-1-diabetes/smoking.jsp>.

"Weight Loss Matters." ADA, 2009. Accessed 7/8/09 at <http://www.diabetes.org/weightloss-and-exercise/weightloss-healthy-weight-loss.jsp>.

Cold Sores: Just the Facts

Cold sores – also known as fever blisters – are usually caused by type 1

herpes simplex virus, which is incurable.

Cold sores appear as small blisters on the lip and around the mouth; they usually last 7-10 days without treatment.

More than half of all Americans get the virus by their 20s, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Over-the-counter treatments include topical lidocaine, benzyl alcohol and pain relievers. Your provider can prescribe an antiviral medication.

Cold sores are at their most contagious when blisters first appear until they dry and crust over. Never squeeze or pick at the blisters.

When you have blisters, avoid skin contact such as kissing, and sharing utensils, towels, razors and other items you use. Wash your hands before touching your mouth, face and other sensitive parts. Take care with your eyes – the virus may cause blindness in infected eyes.

Using sunblock on your lips and face year-round helps prevent outbreaks.

Sources:

“Cold Sore.” Mayo Clinic, 3/13/08. Accessed 6/30/09 at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/cold-sore/Ds00358>.

“Cold Sores.” WebMD. Accessed 6/30/09 at <http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/tc/cold-sores-topic-overview>.

“Cold Sores.” NIH, 5/20/09. Accessed 6/30/09 at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/coldsores.html>.

GOAL LINE It’s good to move. Aerobic (with oxygen) exercise helps your heart and other muscles use oxygen better to improve fitness.

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SAFETY SOLUTIONS

Stop, Thief!

The Web isn’t the only place where thieves can steal your

identity. Skilled identity thieves have many ways of gathering your private information. Watch out for these ploys:

Mailbox theft. Some thieves can take all the information they need from your mailbox by stealing bank and credit card statements, preapproved credit offers, checks or tax information. *Solutions:* Use a locked mailbox. Have a trusted neighbor collect your mail if you're away for more than a day. Drop your bills into a U.S. postal mailbox instead of leaving them for the mail carrier (or a thief).

Trash sifting. Thieves will look through your trash to obtain bills or other documents with your personal information on it. *Solution:* Shred everything before discarding or recycling.

Changing your address. There are thieves who will go as far as completing a change of address form to divert your billing statements and personal information to another address. *Solution:* Track your bills. If you haven't received a bill in a timely manner, call the billing company.

Pretexting. According to the Federal Trade Commission, "pretexting is the practice of getting your personal information under false pretenses." For example, criminals may call and pretend they're with a research company or your bank to acquire personal information such as your social security number and birth date. They then use this information to access your personal finances. *Solution:* Never give out personal information over the phone or via e-mail.

Stealing. Thieves can steal your identification by robbing your home or stealing your purse or wallet. *Best bet:* Carry only what you need in your purse or wallet. Secure other credit cards at home in a safe. Also, don't leave your credit card on the counter at a retail store; hand it to the clerk and then check to be sure it's your card the clerk returns.

Sources:

"Fighting Back Against Identity Theft." FTC, 2008. Accessed 10/21/08 at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/consumers/about-identity-theft.html#Howdothievesstealanidentity>.

"Regulations (Standards - 29 CFR) Lead - 1926.62." OSHA, 2008. Accessed 10/22/08 at http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10.

Driving Drowsy

Each year, highway fatalities increase during the holidays,

according to the National Highway Traffic Administration. Whether you're trying to avoid the crowds by traveling in off-peak hours, or you're part of the holiday traffic migration this year, stay awake and aware on the road.

YOU MAY BE TOO DROWSY TO DRIVE IF YOU:

- Can't focus on the road.
- Yawn and blink frequently or your eyes feel heavy.
- Daydream or your thoughts wander.
- Forget the last few miles driven.
- Miss exits or traffic signs.
- Can't keep your head up.
- Drift into other lanes, or hit the shoulder.
- Feel restless and irritable.

Nodding off? The National Sleep Foundation suggests: A 10-20 minute break at a rest stop – get out, stretch and have a caffeinated beverage. But if you continue to feel drowsy, stop in a safe place and sleep it off before driving on.

Source:

"Drowsy Driving: Detection and Prevention." National Sleep Foundation, 2009. Accessed on 6/24/09 at <http://www.sleepfoundation.org>.

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EATING SMART

Smart Snacking

Research shows snacking between meals, or eating 4-5 small meals throughout the day, may have advantages over eating just 2 or 3 larger meals without snacking. Eating nutritious foods frequently can aid blood sugar, boost metabolism, manage hunger and reduce bingeing.

The right snacks can also prevent overeating at meals and help control your calorie intake.

Choose snacks HIGH in nutrition and volume and LOW in calories (nutrient-dense). To keep hunger at bay and provide long-term energy, include foods that offer at least 5 grams of protein and about 5 grams of fiber per serving.

High-Energy Snacks:

- A small sandwich
- A cup of low-sodium soup
- A small salad with a slice of leftover chicken or lean beef

- Baked tortilla chips with fat-free refried beans, reduced-fat cheese, and salsa
- Baby carrots with low-fat ranch-style dip
- Celery sticks with a dab of peanut butter
- A pear with reduced-fat cottage cheese
- Fruit topped with low-fat granola
- Yogurt and nuts

Prepare snacks in advance. Buy pre-cut vegetables and fruits – slice up some favorites for added zing to your morning or afternoon pick-me-up. Store small portions of healthy leftovers in small containers you can toss in a bag when you're on the go or off to work.

Don't have time to fix your snack at home? Keep nuts, dried fruit, beef jerky or whole-grain crackers in your glove box or work place. Keeping pre-made snacks on hand helps you avoid the vending machine and the pastry case at the coffee shop next door.

Energy bars? They are generally high in calories, so check labels for lighter brands. Choose those with 3-5 grams of fiber and 5-10 grams of protein, no saturated fat, and fewer than 20 grams of sugar.

Sources:

"Incorporate Healthy Snacking in Your Eating Plans" ADA, 7/19/08. Accessed 6/18/09 at http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home_4489_ENU_HTML.htm.

"Snack Healthy." WebMD. Accessed 6/24/09 at <http://www.webmd.com/diet/snack-healthy-8/default.htm>.

"Smart Snacking" ADA, 1/10/08. Accessed 6/17/09 at http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home_15345_ENU_HTML.htm.

Have a Slice Without the Price

Pizza is a favorite. It's delicious, convenient and made to order. The downside is that pizza is often loaded with calories that can blow your calorie quota. **Consider this:** Burning the 300-plus calories in a slice of pepperoni pizza takes about 40 minutes of biking at a moderate pace.

For a nicer slice when eating pizza out or making your own at home:

- Eat one slice and have a salad on the side.
- Remove some of the grease on top with a napkin.
- Choose toppings such as vegetables instead of fatty meats or extra cheese.
- Choose thin-crust pizza, and leave the outer crust.

Sources:

"Pizza." Weight Watchers. Accessed 6/17/09 at http://www.weightwatchers.com/util/art/index_art.aspx?art_id=35561&tabnum=1&sc=3417&subnav=Cheat+Sheets.

"Pizza = Portable Nutrition." American Dietetic Association. Accessed 6/25/09 at http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home_16004_ENU_HTML.htm.

"Test your Knowledge of Portion Sizes." NYC Health Commission. Accessed 6/17/09 at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/csi/obesity-flipchart-15.pdf>.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Cranberry Oat Muffins

- 1 cup whole fresh cranberries
- 1/8 cup white sugar
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/3 cup light tub margarine
- 1/2 cup brown sugar substitute
- 1/4 cup egg substitute
- 1 cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

- 1 Combine cranberries and sugar; set aside 45 minutes.
- 2 Combine oats and buttermilk in separate bowl.
- 3 In large bowl, mix margarine, brown sugar, egg.
- 4 In another bowl mix flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
- 5 Combine walnuts and other ingredients, gently folding in cranberries.
- 6 Drop into baking cups and bake at 400°F for 25 minutes.

MAKES 20 MUFFINS.

PER MUFFIN:

123 calories | 2.8g protein | 5.4g fat | 15g carbs | 1g fiber |
202mg sodium

GOAL LINE It's Diabetes Month, time to ask your provider about screening if you are overweight and have a family history of the disease.

Hormones needed for women?

Recent studies have changed the face of hormone therapy for women. Physicians used to recommend “*replacing*” hormones after menopause, but now prescribe hormones mainly to alleviate menopausal symptoms.

Benefits: Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is the most effective remedy for menopausal hot flashes and night sweats. It also relieves vaginal problems related to menopause. And studies suggest HRT may help prevent osteoporosis (bone loss) and colorectal cancer.

Risks: The Women’s Health Initiative has linked increased risk of breast cancer, blood clots, stroke and heart disease in women who use HRT. The hormones also create a higher rate of abnormal mammograms due to increased breast tissue density.

Therapy consists of estrogen plus progestin, or estrogen alone. The benefits of short-term HRT frequently outweigh the risks for women with moderate to severe menopausal symptoms. If you are considering HRT, discuss the risks and benefits thoroughly with your provider.

Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Sources:

“Use of hormone therapy for menopausal symptoms.” CME Bulletin, American Academy of Family Physicians, 5/08.

“Hormone therapy: Is it right for you?” Mayo Clinic, 2/19/08. Accessed 6/18/09 at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hormone-therapy/W000046/METHOD=print>.

Why do fad diets fail?

Fad diets often claim to offer “quick fixes” for weight loss. And at first, they sometimes work since people eat fewer calories when food choices are limited. But fad diets eventually fail for several simple reasons.

- Most weight lost from low-calorie fad diets comes from water and muscle, not fat. When you resume eating normally, you quickly regain the water weight. The muscle does not return, however, unless you combine weight loss with exercise.
- Losing more than 1-2 pounds a week makes your body think it’s

starving. Your metabolism slows to conserve energy, and you burn calories less efficiently, causing extra weight gain over time.

- A diet that limits food choices or requires you to repeatedly eat the same foods is boring. When you return to your old eating habits, the weight creeps right back on.

What's the alternative? A balanced diet with smaller portions and regular exercise can help you lose weight gradually and permanently.

Source:

"Nutrition for weight loss: What you need to know about fad diets." American Academy of Family Physicians, 10/07. Accessed 6/24/09 at <http://www.familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/healthy/food/improve/784.printreview.html>.

□ QUICK STUDIES

- **Youth is no defense against developing type 2 diabetes later.** Northwestern University researchers found that aerobically unfit adults 18-30 years old were at 2-3 times higher risk for the disease than their fit peers. And among those who had the same fitness level, those with a higher body mass index had a greater chance of developing diabetes during the 20-year study. **Bottom line:** Staying fit and at a healthy weight when you're young reduces your risk of type 2 diabetes in middle age.

Source:

"Aerobically unfit young adults on road to diabetes in middle age." Northwestern University, 6/18/09. Accessed 7/9/09 at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-06/nu-auy061809.php.

- **Migraines may offer an advantage** – women who have them appear to be at lower risk of breast cancer. In 2 recent studies, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center researchers observed that female migraine patients shared a lower risk regardless of age at diagnosis, migraine prescription medication use, menopausal status, and whether they avoided migraine triggers. The most recent study examined more than 4,500 women ages 34-64. Researchers are still uncertain why migraines seem to offer protection against breast cancer.

Source:

"Link between migraines and reduced breast cancer risk confirmed in follow-up study." Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, 7/9/09. Accessed 7/9/09 at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-07/fhcr-lbm070209.php.

